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ABSTRACT

This report describes the sources and substance of conflicts as revealed by city managers and superintendents. The data presented are from interviews conducted for a study that compares and contrasts the conflict management behaviors of 52 superintendents and 52 city managers and the conditions that are associated with them. The purpose of the descriptive study is to address two questions: How much conflict from various sources do superintendents and city managers report? What is the substance of the conflict? The first question is based on the assumption that, in addition to generalized conflict, city managers and superintendents respond to demands from a variety of sources (the elected board or council, other administrators, other governments, or segments of the community). The second question involves a comparison of the range in the substance of conflicts faced by superintendents and city managers. These questions are discussed in terms of the two groups' relationships with the public, legislative bodies, and their internal organizations. (Author/MLF)

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A Comparison of the Source and Substance of Conflict in Educational and Municipal Governance

by
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1981

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Source of Conflict	4
The Public	4
The Legislative Body	6
Intraorganizational Conflict	8
Communication and Conflict with Other Governments	14
Major Conflict Episodes	16
Ways in Which Superintendents and City Managers are Significantly Different	17
Ways in Which Superintendents and City Managers are not Significantly Different	18
Substance of Conflict	19
Conclusion	25
References	27

Introduction

This report describes the source and substance of conflicts as revealed by city managers and superintendents. The report is a descriptive study; it is not an explanatory study. Its sole purpose is to address two questions: How much conflict from various sources so superintendents and city managers report? and What is the substance of the conflict? The first question is based on the assumption that, in addition to generalized conflict, city managers and superintendents respond to demands from a variety of sources (the elected board or council, other administrators, other governments, segments of the community, and so on). The second question involves a comparision of the range in the substance of conflicts faced by superintendents and city managers.

The comparison between city managers and superintendents is viewed by many scholars as theoretically necessary and long overdue. The two groups are both products of the municipal reform movement. To replace allegedly corrupt political machines, city governments and school governments created a set of structures that were explicitly designed to minimize conflict and to foster rational and businesslike policy making based upon expertise (Banfield and Wilson 1963; Tyack 1974). The reform model was widely adopted and has influenced at least 50 years of writing about public administration. It is only reasonable to assume, however, that the realities of reform ideology, as the ideology is applied to cities and school districts, will differ. Such differences may be expected to occur when communities are socioeconomically different, or when policy issues are different, or both (Hawley 1974). A good illustration is the problem of school closures. A recent study of Seattle revealed that the problem of

school closures attracted the attention of both the city and the school district. The school district administration approached the problem as a "straightforward exercise in rational planning and decision making. (However,) try as they might to manage the consolidation of facilities as a purely technical problem, political considerations inevitably intruded" (Weatherly et al. 1981). The city's approach was more political. At one point a member of the city council advocated a broad community participation in decision making to replace the purely technical style of the school board. The school board president deplored this effort to make school closures a "political issue (Weatherly et al. 1981). Commenting on this episode, one of the study's authors drew out attention to the difference in ideology revealed by school district and city government officials in approaching the same problems. He alleged that the recruitment and socialization of superintendents requires that they adopt an "insular, technical role" in contrast to the city's broader, more political view (seminar by Richard Elmore, DEPM, June 1981).

Robert Crain's (1963) study of school desegregation also illustrates superintendents' tendencies to view policies as technical issues rather than social or political ones. Crain's case study data on several school districts shows a tendency on the part of superintendents to rule out the social implications of school desegregation decisions. Rather, they focused desegregation decisions on the calculable, known and measurable variables rather than the broader impact on the social relations in their communities. Elmore's conclusions in 1981, therefore, reveal that response to conflict, even though the substance is different, apparently has not changed appreciably.

A contrary view is taken by Boyd (1977). He argues that, while there is "a paucity of data which provides a basis for systematic comparison of

educational government with other arenas of local government . . . . educational government may well be more rather than less responsive than most other branches of local government." Thus, the stage is set for a systematic comparison. This paper is the first of many dealing with an explicit comparison of city managers and superintendents, both products of reform ideology, both legally responsible to an elected board or council. Obviosuly, while there are these clear similarities, there are intriguing differences. Perhaps the most significant is the fact that schools deliver a single service, while cities are "balkanized" into numerous bureaus with unrelated responsibilities. Boyd alleges that this structural difference means that "school officials appear to receive more citizen's requests and demands than other public officials do," but offers no evidence to support this conclusion. He also states that there are strong similarities between public schools and other public agencies such as mental health planning agencies and health and welfare councils. However, none of these other agencies has an elected board and an appointed chief administrator (Warren, Rose, and Begunder 1974).

The study of conflict is an especially apt approach to a resolution of the problem that Elmore and Boyd have raised. ". . . the changeover from growth to decline has posed unfamiliar and difficult problems for educational leaders, and has increased the importance of the conflict management function of government" (Boyd 1978). Both cities and school districts are now constrained by scarce resources, both are governed similarly (thanks to the reform movement), and both are subject to similar intergovernmental control.

The Source of Conflict

The Public

Both city managers and superintendents view their jobs differently than does the public. They respond similarly to the question of whether there is a difference between their view of their job and the public's view. An overwhelming majority of both groups of respondents indicate there is a difference. City managers are slightly more likely than superintendents to take this position, but the difference is not significant (see Table 1).

Table 1: Views About Differences Between City Managers/ Superintendents and the Public

(Question #5. "Are there any important differences between what you think the job of a school superintendent/city manager involves and the way the public sees it?")

	Difference	No Difference	N
Superintendents	73%	27%	52
City Managers	81%	19%	52

sig = .35

However, the general issue of community dissension is more intense for city managers because they are more likley to believe that the public is not homogeneous, that the public reveals high levels of disagreement and a lack of consensus. This may come as a surprise to those who believe that the public is bitterly divided over the goals of education. Indeed, media coverage of the more sensational aspects of public disagreement

(such as over scientific creationsism) has created an impression of a polarized public. However, nearly two-thirds of the superintendents classified their constituents as having low levels of disagreement among themselves, while an identical proportion of city managers viewed their public as having high levels of disagreement (Table 2).

Table 2: Beliefs Concerning the Existence of Disagreements Within the Public

(Question 5D. "Would you say there is a lot of disagreement, a moderate amount, or not very much among the public?" *Response categories a lot, moderate = many differences, not very much = few differences.)

	Few Differences*	Many Differences*	N
Superintendents	60%	40%	52
City Managers	40%	60%	52

sig = .05

Of course, this question addresses the superintendents' and city managers' perceptions of levels of intrapublic disagreement which may in fact contradict the actual amount of dissension. Even if the perceptions and objective reality do not coincide, it is still interesting that the majority of superintendents perceive a low level of disagreement in their school districts. This would suggest that the superintendents minimize the importance of those constituents that disagree among themselves, believing instead that the majority of the public are in silent concurrence with the existing district policies. More objective information will assist us in clarifying this point.

The Legislative Body

Another major difference between superintendents and city managers lies in their preception of any real or potential misunderstanding between them and the legislative bodies that employ them. Nearly two thirds of the superintendents believe that there are no differences, that their boards and they are in agreement about the appropriate role of the superintendent. In contrast, about two-thirds of the city managers believe that there is a misunderstanding (Table 3). There is also a tendency for city managers to identify two or more members of the city council as being in disagreement with them over their role. However, majorities of both groups of respondents (abbreviated as an R in the Tables), can locate one or fewer dissenters; hence, the difference is not significant (Table 4). Yet, even though both groups believe that dissent is isolated, city managers face the greater problem because they are unable to predict the composition of a faction in opposition to them. Three times as many city managers as superintendents report that the composition of the opposing faction is unpredictable (Table 5). The commonly held assumption about school boards is supported by these data. Habitual "nay sayers" do in fact inhabit boards of education, rendering opposition more predictable for superintendents.

Table 3: Do Legislative Bodies Differ on Role of R?

(Question #8. "Are there any important differences between what you think the job of a school superintendent/city manager involves and the way the school board/city council sees it?")

	Yes	NO	N
Superintendents	40%	60%	52
City Managers	62%	39%*	52

sig = .03
* exceeds 100% due to rounding

Table 4: How Many Members of Legislature Differ About Role of R?

(Question #8A. "How many members hold this different viewpoint?")

	One or None	2 or More	N
Superintendents	65%	35%	52
City Managers	52%	48%	52

sig = .16

Table 5: Are There Predictable Legislative Factions?

(Question #8A. "Are they always the same people?")

	Yes	No	N
Superintendents	83%	17%	24*
City Managers	52%	48%	33*

sig = .01

*missing data = (DNA)

Although both city managers and superintendents report that there is legislative consensus about roles, they differ sharply with regard to policy disagreements. Twice as many city managers report that there are disagreements between themselves and the council "sometimes or often" as do superintendents in assessing their boards (Table 6). Additionally boards tend to be more often in consensus. Nearly two-thirds of the superintendents report infrequent disagreement among board members, while a majority of city managers report frequent disagreement among council members (Table 7).

Table 6: Frequency of Occurrence: Majority of Legislature Disagrees with R

(Question 8C. "How often do you take a stand that the majority of the board/council seems to disagree with? Would you say this happens often, sometimes, rarely, or never?"
Response categories: rarely and never = rarely/never
sometimes and often = sometimes/often)

	Rarely/Never	Sometimes/Often	N
Superintendents	79%	21%	52
City Managers	56%	44%	52

sig = .01

Table 7: Level of Disagreement Among Board/Council

(Question 8D. "Would you say that there is a lot of disagreement, a moderate amount, or not very much within the board/council?"
Response categories: moderate and a lot = high
not very much = low)

	Low	High	N
Superintendents	60%	40%	52
City Managers	44%	56%	52

sig = .02

Intraorganizational Conflict

We turn away from the public and its representatives to consider conflict within the administrative organization. While there were dramatic differences between the two groups with regard to conflict between themselves and the public and its representatives, differences between city managers and superintendents diminish when we consider intraorganizational conflict. Both groups tend to report low levels of conflict between themselves and the administrative staff; between themselves and line officers, and between themselves and employees. In no case does the difference approach significance (Tables 8, 9, 10).

Table 8: Conflict with Staff

(Question 9B. "How frequently do differences exist between you and your administrative staff?"
Response categories: rarely and never = low
sometimes and often = high)

	Low	High	N
Superintendents	63%	37%	52
City Managers	52%	48%	52

sig = .31

Table 9: Conflict with Line Officers

(Question 10B. "How frequently do you and your principals/department heads disagree?"
Response categories: rarely and never = low
sometimes and often = high)

	Low	High	N
Superintendents	57%	41%	52
City Managers	50%	50%	52

sig = .37

Table 10: Conflict with Employees

(Question 11B. "How often do areas of disagreement exist between you and your teachers/employees in this district/city?"
Response categories: rarely and never = low
sometimes and often = high)

	Low	High	N
Superintendents	52%	48%	52
City Managers	60%	40%	52

sig = .43

Still there is an interesting twist in the data in regard to intra-organizational conflict. Even though both city managers and superintendents tend to report low levels of intraorganizational conflict, the tendency differs according to the level of employee being discussed. City managers experience the greatest amount of conflict with their staff and line officers and the least amount of conflict with their line employees. In contrast, superintendents have the least amount of conflict with their staff and line officers and the greatest amount of conflict with the teachers (line employees).

This finding may be explained in part by the difference in services provided: schools supply a single commodity, cities, multiple commodities. Since schools concentrate on the delivery of a single service, there is less likelihood of competition or conflict concerning procedures and resource distribution among the staff and line officers. Cities, on the other hand, deliver several services that might foster competition and empire building between individual departments (Corwin 1970; Lortie 1975).

However, the issue is far from clear concerning the degree to which superintendents and city managers face different levels of intra organizational conflict. A series of additional questions asked the responders to estimate the amount of time they spent in communication with boards and councils, community groups and individuals, local government officials, and with intra organizational professionals and administrators. Additionally, respondents estimate the amount of time spent in conflict resolution with each. The results are intriguing. Although the majority of both

groups reported low levels of intraorganizational conflict, overwhelming majorities reported that they spend a great amount of time in communication with intraorganizational professionals and administrators, and two-thirds reported that most of this communication was conflictual (Table 11). What apparently is happening is that both managers and superintendents serve as mediators of intraorganizational conflict while not themselves often appearing as a disputant.

Table 11: Time spent with Professionals and Administrators in R's Own Organization (Time Spent in Conflict)

(Question 4. "About how much of your time in an average work week do you spend with professionals and administrators within your administration?" "Out of the amount of time spent with professionals and administrators, how much is spent resolving conflict?" Response categories: great deal and moderate = high little = low)

	Low	High	N
Superintendents	4%* (37%)**	96% (64%)[a]	52
City Managers	12% (31%)	89% (69%)[a]	52

*sig = .27 (corrected)
**sig = .53
[a] = does not equal 100 due to rounding

Both superintendents and city managers are likely to spend a great deal of time in communication with their boards and councils (Table 12). However, whereas two-thirds of the city managers report that most of this communication involves conflict, two-thirds of the superintendents report that their communication with the board is nonconflictual. This finding is in keeping with our earlier discussion of executive-legislative

Table 12: Time Spent with Board/Council
(Time Spent in Conflict)

(Question 4. "About how much of your time in an average work week do you spend with the board/council?" "Out of the time spent with the board/council, how much of that time is spent resolving conflict?"
Response categories: great deal and moderate = high
little = low)

	Low	High	N
Superintendents	25%* (65%)**	75% (35%)	52
City Managers	17% (35%)	83% (65%)	52

*sig = .34
**sig = .002

relations. To encapulate, superintendents feel there is less conflict over perceptions of their roles than do city managers; the superintendent is usually confronted by a predictable faction or individual while the city manager is not; superintendents seldom feel a majority of their boards disagree with them while city managers believe they are frequently opposed by a majority of their councils, and city managers see greater conflict among council members than do superintendents among board members. (This latter, at .11, is just on the edge of statistical significance, while the others are statistically more significant.) It is therefore only natural to find that city managers spend a much larger portion of their time handling local legislative conflict than do superintendents. Superintendents may be beleaguered, but not by boards.

It will be recalled that superintendents perceived more community consensus than did city managers. This perception does not, however, mean that superintendents do not spend much time in communication with community groups and individuals, nor does it mean that this communication does not involve conflict. In fact, both groups do commonly communicate with

members of the community and perceive this communication to be conflictual (Table 13). In contrast to the difference in their communication with their respective legislative bodies, there is no significant difference between city managers and superintendents in the amount of time spent with community groups and individuals, or in the extent to which this communication involves conflict. A question for further exploration is the discrepancy between the superintendent's view of the public as consensual, and the extent to which their communication with community agents involves conflict. Perhaps they view the community as more monolithic than city managers, even though this is not the case. Or perhaps they view the community as consensually hostile. Further analysis will shed some light upon this problem.

Table 13: Time Spent with Community Groups and Individuals (Time Spent in Conflict)

(Question 4. "About how much of your time in an average work week do you spend with community groups and individuals?" "Out of the amount of time spent with community groups and individuals, how much of that time is spent resolving conflict?" Response categories: great deal and moderate = high
little = low)

	Low	High	N
Superintendents	31%* (42%)**	69% (58%)	52
	40% (31%)	60% (69%)	52

*sig = .31
**sig = .22

Communication and Conflict With Other Governments

The reform movement sought to insulate schools from the rough and tumble of local politics. Today's superintendents fulfill this expectation: very few of them spend much time with other local government officials (Table 14). City managers are far more likely to do so (although neither group spends much time with other local government officials, three times as many city managers spend a lot of time in this manner when compared with superintendents). To a degree, the greater intertwining of the city manager in local government helps to explain the difference. They are responsible for the delivery of a multitude of services that may involve coordination, a condition less likely to affect a single service organization.

Table 14: Time Spent with Local Government Officials (Time Spent in Conflict)

(Question 4. "About how much of your time in an average work week do you spend with local government officials?" "Out of the time spent with local government officials, how much of that time is spent resolving conflict?"
Response categories: great deal and moderate = high
little = low)

	Low	High	N
Superintendents	92%* (65%)**	8% (34%)[a]	52
City Managers	75% (50%)	25% (50%)	52

*sig = .03 (corrected)
**sig = .11
[a] does not equal 100 due to rounding

More of the city managers' communication with other local government officials is related to conflict, as might be expected since the aims of government are often competitive. (However, this difference is, at .11, not statistically significant.)

A similar pattern can be found when we examine the relation between our respondents and agencies of state and federal governments. Neither city managers nor superintendents spend much time with them, but far more of the city manager's time is spent in conflict with extralocal governments (Table 15).

Table 15: Time Spent with State and Federal Agencies (Time Spent in Conflict)

(Question 4. "About how much of your time in an average work week do you spend with state and federal government officials?" "Out of the time spent with state and government officials, how much of that time is spent resolving conflict?"
Response categories: great deal and moderate = high
little = low)

	Low	High	N
Superintendents	83%* (50%)**	17% (50%)	52
City Managers	79% (27%)	21% (73%)	52

*sig = .62
**sig = .02

Taking an overview of these data we find that about two-thirds of the city managers' communication with the council, the community, intraorganizational professionals, other local governments, and extralocal governments

is conflictual. In comparison, less than half of the superintendents' communication is conflictual. These data, taken with what has been described above, paint a picture of the city manager as more engaged in the business of conflict management than superintendents.

Major Conflict Episodes

When the respondents were asked to describe the major conflictual episode during their tenure on the job, managers and superintendents both revealed that the community ultimately became engaged (Table 16). Whereas more city managers described episodes involving only the city council, majorities in both groups reported the participation of the community. It is of major interest that majorities of both groups reported that the conflict was initiated internally; the community involvements occurred as an expansion of intraorganizational conflict (Table 17). However, more city managers reported external initiators (the difference is not significant, although twice as many managers reported external initiators).

Table 16: Source in Major Episode
(Those Who Participated)

(Question 13. "Consider the specific incidents that have caused conflict to occur during your tenure as a school superintendent/city manager. Now take the most important incident and discuss how you handled it." Discussion of this question generated information about the participants in the major episodes.)

	Administrators	Administrators & Board/Council	Community	N
Superintendents	27%	9%	63%	52
City Managers	20%	22%	58%	52

Table 17: Initator in Major Conflict

(Question 13. "Consider the specific incidents that have caused conflict to occur during your tenure as a school superintendent/ city manager. Now take the most important indicent and discuss how you handled it." Discussion of this question generated information about initators of major conflicts.
Response category "internal" includes the respondent, the district/ city, legislative, line officers, employees, stable organization, ad hoc organization; "external" includes stable organizations, ad hoc organizations, general public, and other government agencies.)

	Internal	External	N
Superintendents	85%	15%	52
City Managers	71%	29%	52

To conclude our discussion of the source of conflict, we offer a summary of differences and similarities between superintendents and city managers.

Ways in Which Superintendents and City Managers are Significantly Different:

1. Levels of disagreement within the public (superintendents see less).
2. Differences with legislative body on appropriate role of administrator (superintendents see fewer differences).
3. Predictability of legislative opposition (superintendents see more).
4. Frequency of occurrence of majority of legislature in opposition to administrator (superintendents see less).
5. Time spent in conflictual communication with legislative body (superintendents spend less time).
6. Time spent with local government officials (superintendents spend less time).
7. Time spent in conflict with state and federal agencies (superintendents spend less time).

Ways in Which Superintendents and City Managers are not Significantly Different:

1. Belief that the public holds a different perception of their job.
2. Proportion of legislature in disagreement about administrator's role.
3. Level of disagreement within legislative body.
4. Extent of conflict with staff.
5. Extent of conflict with line officers.
6. Extent of conflict with employees.
7. Time spent with intraorganizational professionals.
8. Time spent in conflict with intraorganizational professionals.
9. Time spent with legislative body.
10. Time spent with community organizations and individuals.
11. Time spent in conflictual communication with community.
12. Time spent in conflictual communication with local government officials.
13. Time spent with state and federal agencies.
14. Source of major conflict episode.
15. Initiator of major conflict episode.

Some would argue that comparing superintendents and city managers is like comparing apples and oranges. However, the results show a number of interesting similarities in the sources of conflicts faced by superintendents and city managers. Others have claimed that, since both groups are professional public managers, differences between them will be trivial. Here, also, our results suggest that there are significant differences,

which warrant a comparative study of conflict management in educational and municipal governance.

Substance of Conflict

We noted that both superintendents and city managers face a fairly high degree of public misperception of their jobs. Moreover, this misperception takes a similar form for both groups. City managers believe the public assumes they have more authority, power, or information than is actually the case. Superintendents also list this as a major source of concern, and add that the public expects them to have greater control of service delivery. Both city managers and superintendents therefore complain that too much is expected of them, and that there is scant understanding of the actual constraints and limitations of their jobs. With superintendents, the problem of control over service delivery is especially noteworthy, since they deliver only one service--education. As we know, administrative ability to control the delivery, and especially the consumption, of this service is limited (Coleman 1967; Jencks 1972; Meyer et al. 1979).

On the other hand, city managers and superintendents may have only themselves to blame for the public assumption about their control over service delivery. After all, the basis of city managers' and superintendents' influence in governance is their control over information and technical expertise in the conduct of municipal and educational affairs.

Superintendents and city managers also have some perceptions in common about areas of tension among the public. Superintendents noted (in

order of frequency of mention) the following areas of tension or conflict: general service delivery (50), resource allocation and budget cuts (38), overall goals of education (14), and finance and taxes (10). For city managers, the areas of tension among the public include the following: planning and zoning (56), general service delivery (32), and finance and taxes (13). Thus city managers perceive similar public tensions in two areas: general service delivery and finance and taxes. Unique to city managers is public concern over planning and zoning, a function rarely undertaken by schools (except, of course, when schools are closed). Unique to superintendents is public tension over the goals of education. This finding is particularly important. City managers do not encounter challenges to the basic functions of city government because they are rarely in dispute. For superintendents, however, such fundamental challenges do occur. Keep in mind of course that superintendents perceive a more consensual public than do managers.

As noted earlier, while superintendents perceive a higher level of consensus among the public than do city managers, they both spend a majority of the time in communication with community groups and individuals that is related to conflict management. We suggested earlier that perhaps superintendents view the public as being "consensually hostile." This may stem from the type of issues now confronting almost half the superintendents in our sample. Respondents specifically mentioned the issue of school closures due to declining enrollments (a subject of the resource allocation and budget cuts category) as an area of tension or conflict among the public. During such periods of time the vocal public (which may not, however, be a representative group) may indeed seem hostile.

With regard to the legislative body, which was a source of substantially more trouble to city managers than to superintendents, both groups voice an identical complaint: there is a lack of clarity concerning the appropriate role of policy making versus administration. Both groups agree in exactly the same proportions that this is the major problem (11 mentions).

Within their respective legislative bodies, the city councils are most likely to disagree over planning and zoning. This corresponds with the managers' belief that the public is divided over the same issue. School boards have fewer disagreements, but they cover a wider range of topics. In order of frequency of mention, they are: general service delivery (24), school organization (23), resource allocation (21), and personnel and labor relations (17). There is an irony here. In terms of public and council disagreements, the city emerges as more of a single service agency than does the school administration: planning and zoning is the controversy.

Within the organization, both groups of respondents agree that funding priorities and budgets are the substance of most conflicts. However, once we get beyond funding priorities and budgets, there is an intriguing difference. The remainder of the city managers' responses belong to a variety of categories, while superintendents are more likely to mention intraorganizational disputes about personnel assignments (7) and degree of control and authority between the central office and the schools (22 mentions). There is more than money at stake here. Perhaps the response among city managers most directly comparable to the issue of central

office-school relations is "empire building" by various departments of the city (8 responses).

Responses concerning disputes with employees were also similar, yet different. Half the superintendents and more than half of the city managers (32) mention wages and benefits as a topic of major conflict with employees. However, superintendents were more likely (12) to be concerned about collective bargaining conflicts than were managers (4). Other responses unique to superintendents included reduction in force (RIF) and program cuts (7), whether to make decisions about the assignment of personnel on the basis of merit vs. seniority (7), increased work load performance (6), and class size (6).

Taken together, we can conclude that money, budgets, salaries, and wages comprise most of the intraorganizational conflict of both superintendents and managers.

But, recalling the earlier findings pertaining to the source of intraorganizational conflict (Tables 8, 9, and 10) superintendents are more likely than city managers to be challenged by their employees over policy issues. This may be attributed to what Corwin (1970) calls teachers' "militant professionalism," which has grown in the last two decades. Do not forget, however, that at the bivariate level, these differences are not significant. Confounding variables may, of course, diminish the relationships. Multivariate analysis may either strengthen or diminish further the observed relationships.

There are other similar repsonses. About three-fourths of both groups do not see racial problems or affirmative action problems as the substance

of conflict (Tables 18, 19). However, superintendents are significantly more likely than are city managers to believe that financial problems are a major substance of conflict (Table 20). This may be explained by the fact that school districts have funding cuts because of declining enrollments, as well as more general budget constraints also faced by city governments. The same is true for collective bargaining: it creates more conflict for superintendents than for city managers (Table 21).

Table 18: Is Race a Problem?

	Yes	No	N
Superintendents	23%	77%	52
City Managers	29%	71%	52

sig = .65

Table 19: Is Affirmative Action a Problem?

	Yes	No	N
Superintendents	21%	79%	52
City Managers	31%	69%	52

sig = .26

Table 20: Is Finance a Problem?

	Yes	No	N
Superintendents	75%	25%	52
City Managers	54%	46%	52

sig = .02

Table 21: Is Collective Bargaining a Problem?

(For Tables 18-21, Question 14. One reads and hears about other problems that affect schools/cities such as affirmative action regulations, racial issues, financial matters, collective bargaining, and state and federal interventions. Have any of these issues been a particular problem in your domain?)

	Yes	No	N
Superintendents	56%	44%	52
City Managers	33%	67%	52

sig = .02

Both groups are bothered to a similar degree by state regulations (Table 22). However, federal regulations are more troublesome to superintendents than to city managers (Table 23).

Table 22: Are State Regulations a Problem?

	Yes	No	N
Superintendents	85%	15%	52
City Managers	73%	27%	52

sig = .15

Table 21: Are Federal Regulations a Problem?

(For Tables 22 and 23, Question 14. "One reads and hears about other problems that affect schools, such as affirmative action regulations, racial issues, financial matters, collective bargaining, and state and federal interventions. Have any of these issues been a particular problem in your domain?")

	Yes	No	N
Superintendents	85%	15%	52
City Managers	62%	39%	52

sig = .008

A final opportunity to compare and contrast the two groups is found in our question about major conflict during the respondent's tenure in office. For city managers, as expected, the major conflict episode involved planning, zoning, or development. For superintendents, the most frequently cited substance of conflict was school closure.

Conclusion

Both Boyd and Elmore have alerted us to the fact that school closure is highly conflictual, and our data is in clear support of their assertions. Both argue that scarcity is certain to induce conflict. James Q. Wilson is quite emphatic on this point: "the politics of scarcity is the politics of conflict" (Banfield and Wilson 1963). We concur, and will be addressing the problem of conflict management from a comparative perspective. There are unique problems, but there are similar substances of conflict. As our data indicate, problems of scarcity plague both city governments and school

governments. Managers and superintendents have unique problems, but they also have common ones. How they resolve these conflicts will become our focus in the future.

Scarcity is not likely to diminish given current and future demographic developments. It is unlikely therefore, that finacial issues (such as school closure) and its attendant problems (including collective bargaining) will disappear in the near future. Since they spend less time handling conflict than do city managers, superintendents may be able to learn from the conflict management behavior of city managers as they face more conflictual situations.

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